

**Oakdale Civic Association  
General Monthly Meeting  
September 8, 2008**

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**2008 Officers**

President:	Stan Feldman	523-8835
Vice President:	Ray Carta	218-0041
Treasurer:	Pat Kassten	589-8222
Recording Secretary	Carol Schwasnick	589-7455
Corresponding Secretary	Marilyn Triolo	589-5981

**Board Members**

Cathy Cohen  
John Eder

*Minutes Recorded by: Carol Schwasnick*

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President Feldman called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm, opening with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to accept the June minutes made and accepted by the membership.

**Treasurer's report: Pat Kassten**

Income from dues \$100. Total disbursements included the annual cost of newsletter and membership mailings. President Feldman stated that Washington Mutual currently has a CD for 5%, with \$1,000 minimum for 13 Months. President Feldman requested a motion to move \$1,500 to a CD account. John Eder makes a motion, Rita Kushner seconds.

**President's Report**

President Feldman noted that the Town of Islip is holding a rain-or-shine rabies clinic on Saturday September 13. Flyers are available.

Correspondence: Steve Flotteron could not attend this month, but he did write a letter addressing wifi in the terminal at MacArthur airport. "I know you have suggested over the past two years is to install wireless... We re getting closer – taking proposals for installation and maintenance for a no-cost wireless access system." He stated.

Oakdale has been vigilant on the issue of signs attached to poles and trees in the hamlet, with a small contingent of Oakdale residents removing hundreds every month. On June 26 a letter was received from Phil Nolan, regarding his enactment of a stronger removal program. Supervisor Nolan is also having the Town Attorney investigate stronger legislation to better control posting of signs. This should assist with Oakdale's efforts in the near future.

**Guest Speaker: Vickie Kuhn – Oakdale Chamber of Commerce.**

Vickie reported that the Chamber is running the "Taste of Oakdale" event again on October 28 in the Dowling ballroom. Many restaurants from Oakdale give a donation of their specialties at no cost to attendees. OK-Dokey is a new addition; they did a great job on their new restaurant, and are excited to be part of this event. Flyers are available about the occasion: Oct 28, 7pm in the ballroom. Vickie stated they will need a lot of hands, especially if the restaurants cannot bring their own food in, or for setup/clean up. Some kids doing their confirmations will be there doing community service.

### **OCA Scholarship Winner**

Barbara Schermerhorn introduced Lucille Weigand and her mother, Dawn. Lucille is this year's OCA scholarship winner. Lucille expressed her thanks and reported that she will be attending Stony Brook University for forensics, although she may have to transfer to John Jay College eventually, because they offer a wider variety of programs in this area.

### **Town Report: John Eder**

"Ben Franklin Store"/ Pods Store. John talked to Gene Murphy who was not aware of it, because they did not need a permit for work to the building. Sounds like it is a similar concept to the Attias flea market.

OK-Dokey has opened, grand opening tomorrow 9/9. Mannino's still working on their building although reports are that it is largely done with the exception of the parking lot. Green Cactus Café is still working on it according to Gene, although no activity is evident at the location.

A hearing was held in July on the driving range. The panel seemed to want the community to say something. So John did say a few words, not against their project but about the density of it. In August, Gene Murphy reported the Town suggested to the developer, Gargano, that they look at an assisted living facility.

Oakdale Vision Plan: Cathy Cohen: tomorrow a town hearing will be announced for the Oakdale vision plan; the hearing should take place within 30 days.

Jamie Flynn added that the Oakdale Vision Plan is a guide for the future, so when buildings get sold and renovations are done or new buildings go up there is a plan around it for how these things should look and fit into the community. These will be guidelines that are on the books, this is the plan for our town as we move forward, so after us the folks that come in will have to follow those guidelines.

A member stated that it has been a long time since we have heard about the plan, and that it had been developed as a reaction to the problem that happened here a few years ago, when Dowling was going to build dorms on Montauk Hwy, and nobody in Oakdale knew anything about this. We wanted to start a project to protect ourselves from things like this in the future.

Bank plans at Oakdale Shopping Center East: Gene said same thing as last time. No site plan was approved. He would not verify that it was Chase.

St. John's property: no update.

Rollstone estates still moving forward for Suffolk County to deed it to the Town, who will then lease it to the lacrosse club, issue still is who will clean up the parcel.

### **Guest Speaker: Bill Lindsay, Presiding Officer, Suffolk County Legislature**

Mr. Lindsay wanted to recognize Vickie Kuhn on the ribbon cutting for the benches and clock that were recently dedicated by the train station. This project came about because of grants that came from the County that Mr. Lindsay secured.

Rollstone Estates: Mr. Lindsay noted that before we can clean up the parcel we have to conclude the sale. The County has made an offer and the owners are anxious to sell. It is in contract. This deal is a bit atypical because usually the County buys clean property, the only thing we do not want to take the house down that is on the property. The Lacrosse Club can use this for offices etc. It is progressing more rapidly than the rest of the County acquisitions. Rollstone estates is a parcel that runs along the railroad tracks and is almost landlocked. The owners wanted a condo project, but neighborhood objected. The last

proposal was for 27 houses, and the battle has been going on for years and years. The land has no value for preservation purposes. It has a bunch of dilapidated greenhouses; the only purpose that made sense for the parcel is that that some of the local youth activity groups need a place to have their games.

Mr. Lindsay advised that an assisted living that was supposed to be developed in Bayport has just backed out.

On the County level it's been a busy summer, the County won a lawsuit against the oil companies. They were putting an additive in gas called MTBE. It rapidly descended into our water table. Our water table was damaged. It quickly became a class action lawsuit that other jurisdictions picked up on. It didn't mean a lot of money to the county, only \$1M, but to the Suffolk County Water Authority it means \$100M. This means that the future of our water will be pure, and clean up will be handled.

Mr. Lindsay also noted it has been a bad two years for Suffolk County. Why? The economy. He said he thinks the recession hit here earlier than the rest of the country. We depend on Sales tax revenue and this has been plummeting. The County depends on growth for revenue, instead this has been plummeting and we have been in the mode of cutting to save money. It is not an easy time to be in government. The County has an HMO they created 10 years ago to funnel healthcare to low income folks, this was recently sold it to a private entity. Last year Steve Levy, Suffolk County Executive, eliminated the DARE program. This year we have an early retirement incentive. This gets people out and does not replace them, which makes it difficult to provide services in a lot of areas. Recently the County has been discussing selling tobacco revenue. A couple of years ago, Suffolk County sued tobacco companies saying that tobacco makes people sick. Suffolk County gets \$25M/year from tobacco companies, reflected by tobacco revenue with inflation adjustment. The County securitized this future income, to get more cash up-front to solve fiscal problems. We need the money now and the future of tobacco revenue is questionable so steps have been taken to economize. There is still a fiscal problem, from here on out it becomes more difficult to close the gap. We are facing a hard balance between providing services to citizens as opposed to paying bills. Mortgage and energy crises are a one-two blow on the County. People are not spending and not going shopping. Suffolk County is feeling a dramatic effect from this. Mr. Lindsay has been in government since 2001, that was the last really bad year. This is rivaling that year in terms of fiscal distress.

The Nursing home: Suffolk County maintains a nursing home in Yaphank. People say government is involved in too many things and they don't need a lot of government, but when I call 911 I should get response, though. When I get old and need a nursing facility there should be a place where I can go where they will take care of me properly. This is not just a geriatric nursing home; the average age is under 50. The facility has an AIDS unit, quadriplegics there that were in accidents, some people with MS. Mr. Lindsay is skeptical that private industry will take care of these people as well. There is a current debate on whether to close this facility to save money, or to fire managers to make it more financially viable. The membership posed a question on how does a patient get admitted to the County nursing home? Mr. Lindsay replied that this process is similar to most other nursing homes and most of the patients there are Medicaid/Medicare eligible. However, Suffolk County will take the difficult patients that other places will not take. There is no waiting list, admittance depends on bed availability.

The membership raised questions about the recent effort to take Suffolk County Police Officers off the Expressway. Mr. Lindsay stated that he agrees the state is not living up to its responsibility in regards to the roads. Thirteen Police officers were removed from patrol July 1. On Oct 1, 13 more will be pulled off. There are a total of 60 officers in the highway patrol unit. State has refused to contribute more funds to it. They are not saying no but not saying yes. The County Executive is demanding that NY State send state troopers to man the highways. For now, deputy sheriffs are covering this responsibility. Officers pulled off

the highway are being reassigned to precincts; 80-100 officers retire every year, we are down 200 officers or so from last year, need to start a new class every year so as not to lose headcount.

Parks department: recently the County lost sixteen people - their most senior - who took early retirement; they were replaced by 3 people. The County has lost knowledge and experience by gaining dollars from these early retirements. For the last 4 years we have managed cut real estate taxes very minutely. Maybe we can't continue to do that. On the good side we have been sitting on a \$131M reserve. If we decide to dip into the reserve funds we have to raise taxes a min of 2.5%, in the general fund tax. This equates to \$3/year per family.

Sidewalk project: Mr. Lindsay recently met with Cathy Cohen and they asked the director of highway construction the same questions. Design work is being done, and there is \$2M in the capital budget so this project will resume. Design work covers the stretch of Montauk Hwy from West Sayville to the bridge (over the LIRR tracks) in Oakdale. The project includes repairing and replacing sidewalks, curbing, putting in brick, adding new streetlamps. The membership asked if the Civic Association can view plans for the sidewalk project so we can look at them and kick them around. Mr. Lindsay said he thought it would be possible and will look into making the plans available once the design work is done. He noted that the period lighting in front of West Sayville fire house was partially covered from a grant from the NY State. The new sidewalks will run down one side of Montauk Hwy only. The project of repairing Montauk Hwy started in Bayport and has extended through West Sayville. It is currently 2/3 of the way complete.

The membership stated that they are concerned with hurricane preparedness, as drainage has not been properly attended to. Mr. Lindsay stated that Montauk Hwy. is a County responsibility. Extensive drainage work is required; it has not been upgraded in 60 years. Pipes needed to be replaced along Montauk, there are many that are undersized or collapsed. The infrastructure must be increased to handle the population growth. One difficulty is that the County does not have total mapping of the highway drainage system. This has not existed and is something that is being worked on now.

Membership question: Do we have Town law enforcement agents anymore? Commercial vehicles do not belong in residential areas. President Feldman noted that the Town should be called, and would respond to the violation. Night number for Public Safety: 224-5300.

Membership requested an update on Oakdale-Bohemia Road and Montauk Hwy intersection. Mr. Lindsay noted that there is a plan to cut the right turn lane back to the LIRR tracks.

Joanne Festa commented that apparently Dowling does not have an adequate sewage system for its size, and there is concern with contaminating the Connetquot River. The Sewer Agency has confirmed that the system is fine, but Cathy Cohen brought a video in the other day there is a plume of sewage that you can see from the arboretum. Mr. Lindsay is in the process of forwarding this to the Commissioner of the Suffolk County Dept. of Health.

Honoree in March: Bill Lindsay has agreed to allow the Maritime Museum to honor him as the Museum's "Man of the Year." Heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Lindsay on this honor.

**Roundtable Update: Jamie Flynn:**

Green Cactus Cafe: they will be opening, that business will be moving forward, Health Dept has to check the cesspools are adequate.

Mannino's: just applied for approval for positioning of the dumpster. Opening within weeks. They are getting ready to open, and have done a beautiful job on the restaurant. Paving and putting the parking lot in is the last phase.

Oakdale Vision Plan: Gene Murphy has put that forward to the Town Board, will go on the docket very soon to have an open hearing. Earlier in this meeting we were talking about what the vision plan is designed to do. Any time there is a request for a renovation or new construction, the Town will have on record Oakdale's preference for zoning. Over a period of time, we will have downtown that is more thought out and is more similar to a Sayville or East Islip with apartments or retail. Might have to eliminate merge lanes to slow traffic down. Sayville crawls and there are cars parked everywhere, but it works fine. Plan can be changed and modified but only by Oakdale, not by a developer etc. Someday the hope is that Oakdale will have continuity to it, and a center as opposed to a drive-by disjointed community. The plan talks about zoning and aesthetics, with a preference for brick. Making the road conform in a certain way is not in the vision plan. Sidewalks may be part of it, with crossings. But what the road may become is not currently part of the plan.

The membership noted that the Motorcycle shop uses the sidewalk as a parking lot, then speeds them down Vanderbilt. Some folks complain about the "Headless Carolers" on one property. Mr. Flynn pointed out that we cannot eliminate offensive property because people own their property and they do with it what they are legally able to do. The Town has no jurisdiction over bad taste, so can't enforce but when the building is up for change, the Vision plan will come into effect. Mr. Flynn also pointed out that recently constructed buildings, specifically Dunkin Donuts, Wendy's, and the Self Storage company are all brick buildings and already follow elements of the vision plan. The Oakdale Beautification Society, Oakdale Chamber of Commerce, and the OCA have declared Oakdale a sign-free community. This group sends the Town a list every 2 weeks with a list of offenders. This has been effective, but there is nobody at the Town to manage enforcement, so this group will be offering to send manpower in to make the calls on the part of the Town.

Cathy Cohen mentioned that they got together a long time ago with other civic associations to talk about the Sunrise Corridor. There is concern with the amount of construction of big box stores. They asked county to do a project, a study of Sunrise Hwy., and there is a meeting on this issue with the County next week.

Bronco Charlie's: The "Available" sign is no longer there. Nancy Flynn wrote that the Oakdale Beautification society gave Dowling money for shrubs, but to no avail. She wrote a letter that was published, saying that the eyesore had to be fixed. Dowling does not have any money to address this, and the zoning prevents potential buyers from producing a building to house businesses.

Years ago there was a meeting at Oakdale-Bohemia Middle School to try and have the shopping center condemned - where Best Yet is located today. The question was asked whether we can get Bronco Charlie's condemned. If the building is a safety hazard, it is boarded up in accordance with the law. This is a difficult situation to address with Dowling and the Town.

The membership is reminded that there is a democratic primary tomorrow for the position of Senator Owen Johnson (incumbent). There are two people running against him. Owen Johnson is the current representative for a district that includes "north" Oakdale. In the south we are in Senator Caesar Trunzo's district.

John Eder moves to adjourn the meeting and Jamie Flynn seconds. The meeting is adjourned at 9:25pm.